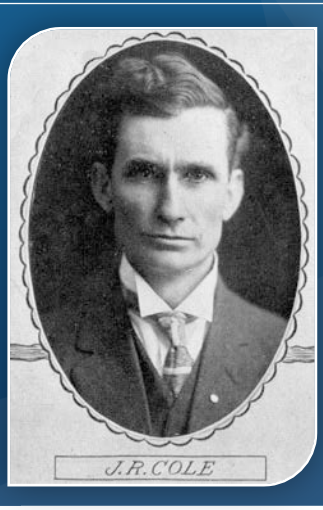
Oklahoma Chess Monthly

DECEMBER 2018

Chess News and Chess History for Oklahoma



In This Issue:

- Early Okla. Chess History 1890-1922
- IM Donaldson Book Review
- 102-year-old Game of the Month
- Plus Puzzles, Top 25 List, Upcoming Tournaments, and more.

SPECIAL ISSUE:

EARLY CHESS HISTORY OF OKLAHOMA

Part 1: 1890-1920

by Tom Braunlich

This month's issue of the OCM is given over almost entirely to the first part of a special series on the early chess history of Oklahoma, featuring a brand new and revealing look at the lost history of Oklahoma chess.

You might be surprised!

This new information is based on Frank Berry's 2007 research into OKC's chess history and my own recent research into the entire state using the new Internet newspaper gateway. We will meet many players you've never heard of, the first champions, see some of their games, and see photos of the first clubs! Enjoy!

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Asst. Ed. Rebecca Rutledge

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Early Chess History of Oklahoma
Part 1: 1890-1920

by Tom Braunlich

We used to think that Oklahoma, a state that was not even formed until 1907, did not have much organized chess activity going on until after World War II and the formation of the OCA.

But it isn't true. With the creation of digitized newspaper archives for online research, which allow you to quickly search newspapers looking for keywords like "chess", it became possible to do fairly extensive research on the subject.

It turns out that Oklahoma has a rich and interesting chess history with chess clubs and tournament activity dating all the way back to 1890! I present it for you here, with Part 1 of a series on Oklahoma's chess history, covering the years 1890-1920.

Oklahoma's chess history is worth reading and knowing about, as you are a part of this long tradition!

The Internet Newspaper Gateway Opens Up Oklahoma's Chess Past

The late Frank Berry was an amateur historian and spent many hours in libraries around Oklahoma searching in old archives for chess references and found a few, but it was slow work. Then in 2016 a new tool became available that Frank was excited about that could enable us to make an outline of early chess in Oklahoma from pioneer days.

The Oklahoma Historical Society's new *Internet Newspaper Gateway* is an online newspaper search tool which allows any researcher to scan early Oklahoma newspapers (including many small-town papers) dating back before statehood and to search for keyword terms. Just before he died Frank enlisted me to help him see what we could find there about early chess in Oklahoma. I carried on this work sporadically over the last two years and have been able to discover some interesting notes and even some photographs about the early days of chess here and present you now this preliminary historical outline on the subject.

> We are going back in time now to the "dark ages" — before the Internet — when although many people knew how to play chess they had few ways to join or even know about organized play.

Here we will look at "Part 1" – the years 1890-1920, which constitute what I believe could be called the First Era of chess in Oklahoma. Part 2, to come in a later issue, will cover the Second Era (1920-1972).

Context

In the USA during the 1800s there generally were well-organized chess clubs and tournaments just in major cities where there was enough concentration of interested players to form a stable community, and enough infrastructures to allow them to communicate with each other efficiently and form tournaments or clubs. New York, Chicago, San Francisco, St. Louis, New Orleans, Boston, and a few others had clubs with permanent meeting rooms and regular organized events. However, in smaller cities clubs either didn't exist or tended to be small, informal, and short-lived.

Furthermore, there was no overall national organization overseeing the sport in the 19th century and working to coordinate tournaments as a central information source that could bring avid players together. There were some chess

publications that attempted to fill this need, but they lasted only a few years until the first successful one came along in 1904 (the *American Chess Bulletin*, published by Herman Helms, which I was also able to search for a few tidbits on chess in Oklahoma). The *American Chess Bulletin* was the first one to serve as a true central chess source for chess in the USA. But generally master-level chess in the 1800s relied on the few major chess centers where patronage money from rich supporters enabled some important matches and tournaments to take place and a few masters to be professionals. Not until the early 1900s was the "Western Chess Association" formed, which mainly focused on holding a championship tournament every year. Later in the 1930s it combined with another group to form the US Chess Federation in 1939 – which included statewide chess organizations in every state.

OKLAHOMA CHESS HISTORY

Although Oklahoma of course got a late start on chess compared to the rest of the country — Paul Morphy had come and gone while Oklahoma was still Indian Territory — nevertheless the research shows club-level play in Oklahoma began even before statehood.

I am going to present the material in the form of a timeline, to make it easier to read and understand…

OKLAHOMA CHESS HISTORY TIMELINE

1830s — Oklahoma is formed as Indian Territory.

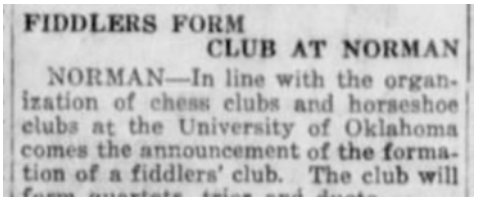
1880s — Land Rushes Begin and Oklahoma is opened to settlers.

1889 — First Newspapers in Oklahoma began publishing.

Occasionally national chess events are mentioned in them as "filler" to plug space with a news item about the current standings in some tournament in Chicago or New York, etc. But mentions of local chess activity are rare.

1890 — First chess club formed at the University of Oklahoma.

The first mention I've found of chess activity in Oklahoma is a small item the *OKC Weekly Times-Journal* about a chess club at OU.



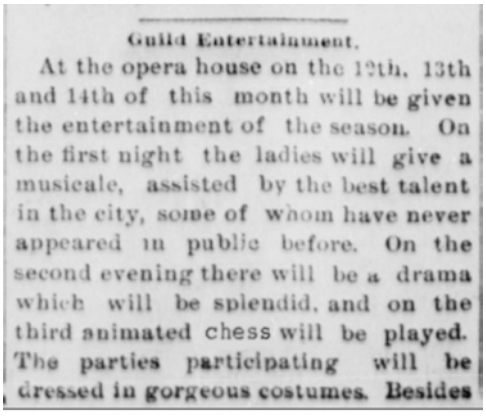
FIDDLERS FORM CLUB AT NORMAN

NORMAN—In line with the organization of chess clubs and horseshoe clubs at the University of Oklahoma comes the announcement of the formation of a fiddlers' club. The club will

The mention is only oblique — the item is about the formation of a "Fiddler's Club" but mentions the chess club has already been formed. One can speculate this was a very informal club since 1890 is the very year OU was founded, but nevertheless it shows there were people interested in chess even this early in the pioneer days of Oklahoma.

1893 — First Chess Event: "Animated Chess"

The *Guthrie Daily Leader* on December 3 publishes an announcement of upcoming Christmas season events, which includes on December 14 at the Opera House an event of "Animated Chess" sponsored by the Guild. "The parties participating will be dressed in gorgeous costumes." Presumably it was like what we call now an exhibition of "living chess."



Guild Entertainment.

At the opera house on the 12th, 13th and 14th of this month will be given the entertainment of the season. On the first night the ladies will give a musicale, assisted by the best talent in the city, some of whom have never appeared in public before. On the second evening there will be a drama which will be splendid, and on the third animated chess will be played. The parties participating will be dressed in gorgeous costumes. Besides

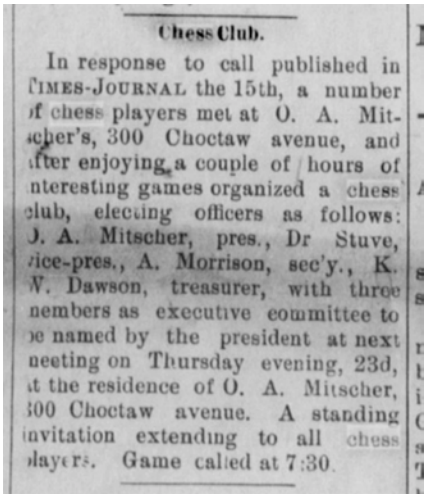
The Guthrie daily leader. (Guthrie, Okla.), 03 Dec. 1893. *Chron*

The town of Guthrie is small now, but at the

time was the territorial capital of Oklahoma, and it later became state capital 1907-1910 until that was moved to OKC. It shows a general interest and knowledge of chess even in these "pioneer" years, and that it had penetrated the "genteel society" of the territorial capital.

1894 — First Oklahoma City Chess Club

The first non-school chess club was formed in 1894, as reported by the *OKC Weekly Times-Journal* on its society page. It was held at the home of *O.A. Mitscher* (300 Choctaw Ave) in OKC, and he was elected the president:



Chess Club.

In response to call published in TIMES-JOURNAL the 15th, a number of chess players met at O. A. Mitscher's, 300 Choctaw avenue, and after enjoying a couple of hours of interesting games organized a chess club, electing officers as follows: O. A. Mitscher, pres., Dr Stuve, vice-pres., A. Morrison, sec'y., K. W. Dawson, treasurer, with three members as executive committee to be named by the president at next meeting on Thursday evening, 23d, at the residence of O. A. Mitscher, 300 Choctaw avenue. A standing invitation extending to all chess players. Game called at 7:30.

Mitscher is the first named Oklahoma active player I've found so far.

It is worth noting that local chess news at this time (up until the 1920s at least) is often reported on the "society page" which in early newspapers (and even today in small-town newspapers) presents local items of interest to the social groups of the town, such as who is visiting whom, who is getting married, what clubs are doing, and so on. Chess clubs were considered like the Book Club or the Ladies Guild, etc.

From 1894-96 this club was active. They had no regular meeting location, but met weekly at the homes of club members. As often happens, the club appears to have gone defunct when the leader/organizer lost motivation at some point. The 300 Choctaw Ave. location is now a burger joint.

Turn-of-the-Century Tournaments

Oklahoma chess organizers had a unique form of running tournaments at their clubs. They simply allowed the players to pair off amongst themselves and play several games on every club meeting night, and then kept track of the scores. The tournament would last a couple of months, over, say, 10 meeting nights; and in the end the winner would be the player with the greatest winning percentage.

It is not clear if they had any method of pairing the leading players with each other or if they just paired-off at random. For a more serious tournament they were familiar with the use of the Round Robin, which is used for the first state tournament later in 1914 and used at various city club championships.

1904 — Second OKC Club and First Tournament

July 29 — Two chess clubs, "The Beginners" and "The Regulars," have begun tournaments in OKC.

"There are several good new players coming to the front. A checker club is now being talked up." They met at the Y.M.C.A. This club eventually became the *"Oklahoma City Chess and Checkers Club"* and continued to exist in various iterations, off and on, up until World War 2 nearly 40 years later. Checkers was a popular as chess in those days, at least as far as the newspaper was concerned.
(Source: F K Berry from *Daily Oklahoman* archives)

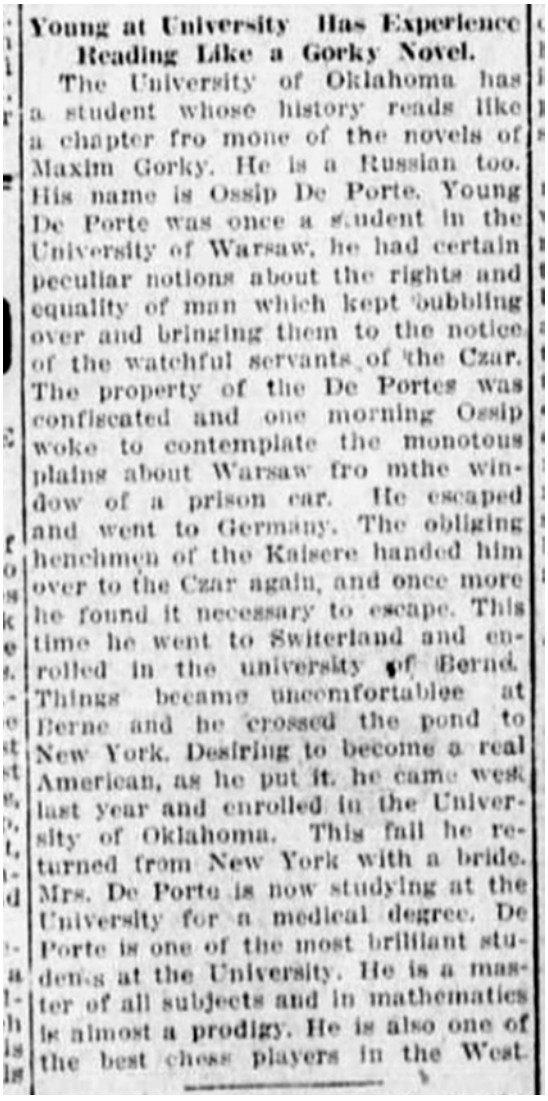
1907 — Statehood

1907-10 — Unofficial State Championship Claimants

Chess clubs proliferated throughout the state in cities after statehood arrived. Rather large and active clubs arose in *Lawton, Guthrie, and Muskogee*. Muskogee's club was frequently mentioned in the Muskogee newspaper. Of course, each club thought their best player must be the best in the state, and without any organized inter-city play there was no way to show otherwise. Several players claimed the title of champion. Among those to claim the title was *J.B. France*, the best player at the time in Lawton. But apparently no one player was ever generally accepted. This would soon change, however.

1909— Ossip DePortes at OU

A Russian immigrant studying at OU was claimed to be "one of the strongest players in the West" by a newspaper feature on him at this time:



Young at University Has Experience Reading Like a Gorky Novel.

The University of Oklahoma has a student whose history reads like a chapter fro mone of the novels of Maxim Gorky. He is a Russian too. His name is Ossip De Porte. Young De Porte was once a student in the University of Warsaw, he had certain peculiar notions about the rights and equality of man which kept bubbling over and bringing them to the notice of the watchful servants of the Czar. The property of the De Portes was confiscated and one morning Ossip woke to contemplate the monotous plains about Warsaw fro mthe window of a prison car. He escaped and went to Germany. The obliging henchmen of the Kaisere handed him over to the Czar again, and once more he found it necessary to escape. This time he went to Switerland and enrolled in the university of Bernd. Things became uncomfortablee at Berne and he crossed the pond to New York. Desiring to become a real American, as he put it, he came west last year and enrolled in the University of Oklahoma. This fall he returned from New York with a bride. Mrs. De Porte is now studying at the University for a medical degree. De Porte is one of the most brilliant students at the University. He is a master of all subjects and in mathematics is almost a prodigy. He is also one of the best chess players in the West.

One should not put too much credence in his claimed level of chess skill; as such claims were common at the time.

I've not been able to find any other information about him in chess literature (but would welcome anyone with more info to contact me.) Perhaps, since he was a well-educated Russian, he was good compared to the other players in Oklahoma at the time, and he might have been among those claiming to be state champion if he was not busy with his schoolwork and wife. He taught a class in Russian language while still a student at OU studying mathematics.

The article says he was hotly pursued by the police in Russia and Germany and escaped eventually to the USA. It doesn't say it, but the reason for this was probably because DePortes was a communist, as many eastern European intellectuals were at this time when radicals like Lenin were gaining strength and causing troubles. The monarchies were cracking down on them. Norman Oklahoma must have seemed like a million miles away from all that to DePortes.

Follow-up articles tell of him playing in the OU chess club (which had apparently gone defunct until he revived it), and in 1912 upon his graduation he moved to New York and there formed a club for former OU students living in New York City. *(Guthrie Daily Leader, Oct 4 1912).*

1910 — First Tulsa Chess Club

Tulsa, which was not yet the 2nd biggest Oklahoma town that it would grow into following World War I, got its first organized chess and checkers club early in 1910. Like most of Oklahoma's clubs it combined with checkers players, and this article says they hoped to get Whist players involved as well to strengthen their numbers (but there is no evidence they succeeded in that).

(See article, next page).

TOP 25

For DECEMBER 2018

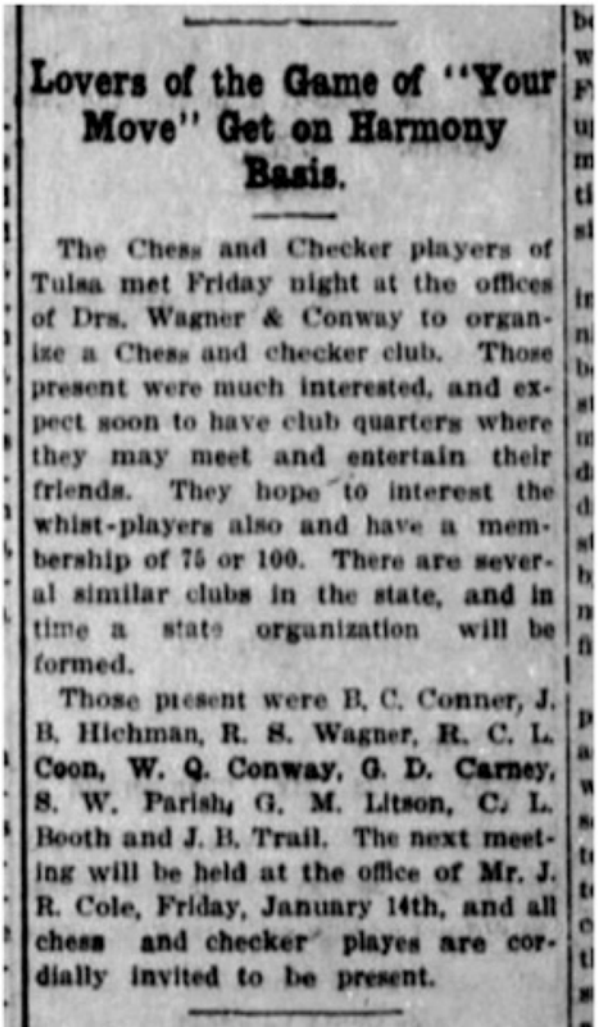
Top 25 Active Oklahoma Players				
	Player	This Month	Change	
1	Advait Patel	2563	0	
2	Howard Zhong	2304	0	
3	Mark Hulsey	2222	0	
4	Bart Gibbons	2217	0	
5	Tom Braunlich	2215	15	▲
6	Sergey Galant	2188	0	
7	Tom Patton	2109	0	
8	Chibuzo C Ilonze	2108	0	
9	Adonis Turner	2084	0	
10	John Cope	2084	0	
11	Charles D Unruh	2072	0	
12	Veronika Zilajeva	2072	0	
13	David Luscomb	2068	0	
14	Chuck Johnson	2063	0	
15	Anthony Paolercio	2062	0	
16	Logan Zachare	2051	-10	
17	Michael Nugent	2042	0	
18	Matt Dalthorp	2040	0	
19	Charles M Unruh	2033	0	
20	Alan Islas	2024	0	
21	James Long	2013	7	▲
22	Jeff Colbert	1998	0	▲
23	Joe Dean Veal	1993	-17	▼
24	Ryan Amburgy	1960	-2	
25	Neil Naputo Sr	1956	0	

Player of the Month

LUKE TRAN

The Wichita youngster won his Quad at the Center-State Quads 3-0 to raise his rating to 1968, nearly 200 times his age!

From THE TULSA DEMOCRAT, January 13, 1910



Lovers of the Game of "Your Move" Get on Harmony Basis.

The Chess and Checker players of Tulsa met Friday night at the offices of Drs. Wagner & Conway to organize a Chess and checker club. Those present were much interested, and expect soon to have club quarters where they may meet and entertain their friends. They hope to interest the whist-players also and have a membership of 75 or 100. There are several similar clubs in the state, and in time a state organization will be formed.

Those present were B. C. Conner, J. B. Hichman, R. S. Wagner, R. C. L. Coon, W. Q. Conway, G. D. Carney, S. W. Parish, G. M. Litson, C. L. Booth and J. B. Trail. The next meeting will be held at the office of Mr. J. R. Cole, Friday, January 14th, and all chess and checker playes are cordially invited to be present.

1910 — J.R. Cole — Important chess organizer and player in Tulsa

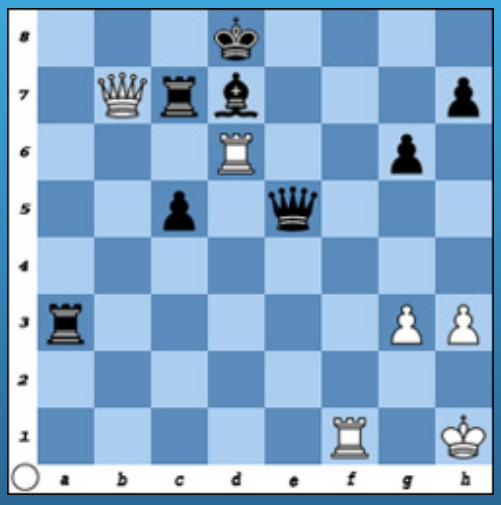
The above article lists the name of J.R. Cole, at whose offices the club would find its first meeting place.

Cole is a prominent businessman and leading figure in the development of early Tulsa, along with his brother C.C. Cole. He was one of the Directors of the First National Bank of Oklahoma, for example. He and C.C. ran many businesses and had their hand in many civic projects, especially after the oil boom hit Tulsa in 1919.

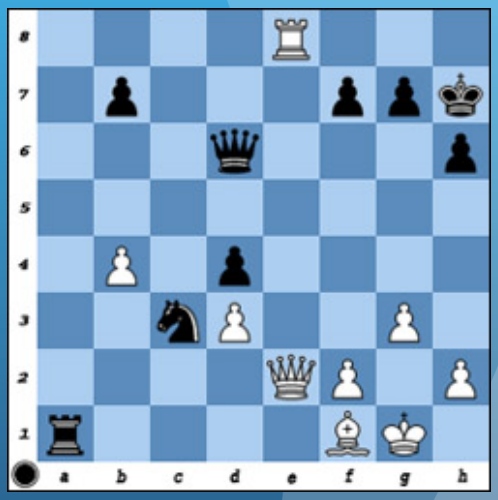
J.R. Cole would continue to be both a strong

PUZZLES

Answers Next Page

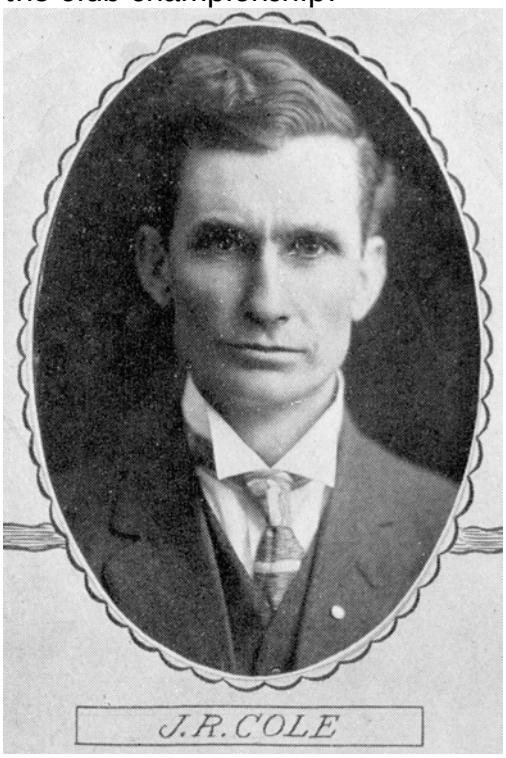


White to move and win. (Easy)



Black to move and win. (Medium)

advocate of organized chess — especially when chess in Tulsa took off exponentially in the early 1920s (see below) — and he was also one of the best players in the area, often winning the club championship.



This photo of him I found in an old yearbook from Kendall College, which later became the University of Tulsa, upon which he sat as one of the board members. It was just one of his many civic activities. He had an impressive life and I hope to write a feature article on him alone, for a later issue of OCM.

Later on the Tulsa club would meet at the YMCA until 1921 when it began meeting at a permanent site on the 2nd floor of Cole's own office building, in the two-story "Cole Building" at 5th and Boston, in the heart of downtown. More on that in Part 2. In the 1950s it was torn down and the First National Bank Building was built there, a tall skyscraper.

1911 — OKC Club Room in the Culbertson Building

The Oklahoma City Chess and Checkers Club began meeting in a nice location on the third floor of the Culbertson Building, which was

Answers to the Puzzles

(1) Farero – LaRota, 2008. 1.Qb8+ gives black a choice of two ways to lose. 1…Ke7 2. Qf8mate, or 1…Rc8 loses the queen after 2. Rxd7+, Kxd7 3. Qxe5. This is a little difficult to see because the diagonal upon which the black queen is lost is full of rooks in the starting position. But they get cleared away with the first two moves.

(2) Jumabayev – Kashlinskaya, 2018. 1…Rxf1+! 2. Kxf1 and now 2…Qc6 forks the rook on e8 and the mating square on h1. After 3. Re4, f5 White Resigned.

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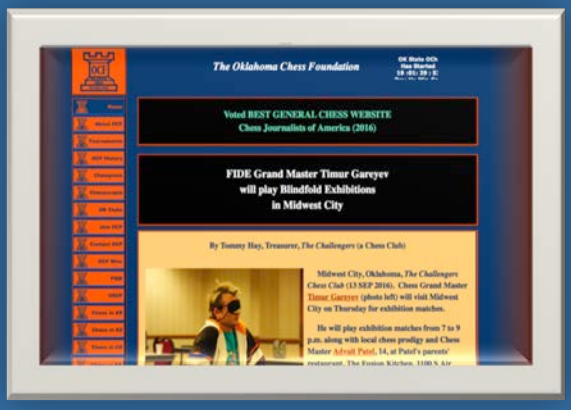
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FIDE Grand Master Timur Gareyev
will play Blindfold Exhibitions
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… and more

downtown on the corner of Grand Avenue and Broadway.

The Culbertson Bldg., site of the first OKC Chess and Checkers Club on the third floor, shown in a 1932 photograph (from Main Street angle).

1912 — First Acknowledged Champion: Charles Luja

Here is the odd story of how Charles Luja became the first acknowledged champion of the state:

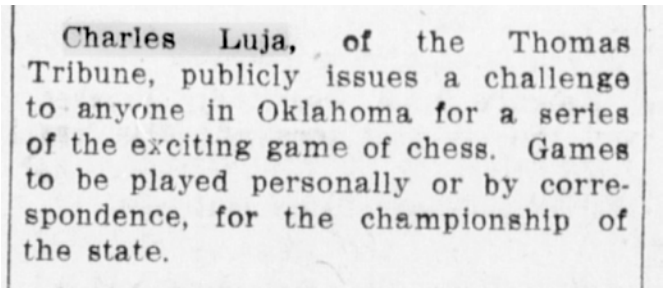
In September 1912, there was a well-publicized chess tournament organized for the annual State Fair of Oklahoma in OKC. The state fair at that time was a major annual event well attended by people from across the state.

There is no information about how many players were in this event or how good they were — my guess is that it was very informal although some of the best OKC-area players may have been there.

The tournament was won by *Charles F. Luja*, from Thomas, Oklahoma, a medium-sized crossroads railroad town serving cattle country west of Oklahoma City. His father, Dr. Charles F. Luja, Sr., was a physician from Missouri, and also a well-travelled chess player who played throughout the Midwest.

Luja worked for the *Thomas Tribune*, a newspaper there that is still in existence today. He spent his career working as a reporter and also as a sketch artist for various small papers in Oklahoma, Nebraska, Kansas, and New Mexico. (He ended up as a publisher in Temple, Kansas, where he died in 1958).

A year later in September, 1913, Luja won this State Fair tournament for the second time, this time with a 12-0 score, and he then used the *Thomas Tribune* to publish a claim to the state title and called for anyone in the state to challenge him for it. This challenge was published in mid-September 1913 in several newspapers across the state.



Charles Luja, of the Thomas Tribune, publicly issues a challenge to anyone in Oklahoma for a series of the exciting game of chess. Games to be played personally or by correspondence, for the championship of the state.

Luja's claim to the title in 1913.

Luja's claim probably was more credible than any previous claim, and it managed to "stick." Remember, at this time before nationally organized play, most championship titles were done on a challenge basis, even the world championship.

Dr. C.A. Freeman, of Geary, who had played in tournaments at the Oklahoma City club, traveled to Thomas to challenge Luja on September 23, 1913. Luja won their match 5-0. This sweep for Luja, combined with his 12-0 score at the State Fair, seems to have impressed everyone.

His claim to the title was further boosted when the prestigious *American Chess Bulletin*, the only leading national chess publication at the time, published the claim in its November 1913 issue (calling him Oklahoma's "invincible chess champion") and

also included part of a biographical sketch on him from the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* newspaper (which also included a photo of Luja). [So far I've been unable to locate this article online, but am working on it.]

That article reported, with the usual over-the-top hyperbole, that Luja is age 31 from Rockport, Missouri, and, "…is a book player and a tireless student of problems and end game play. Perhaps the most conspicuous feature of his style is its soundness; he invariably keeps the draw well in hand at all stages, and makes it a rule to determine the result of every combination before plunging in."

Take such comments with a grain of salt, as the newspapers were known for their propensity for overstatement. During these years in the archives one frequently sees stories about famous players like Pillsbury, Marshall, Capablanca, etc., and invariably they are called "champion of the world." Local editors did not understand the difference between winning an important international tournament and being the world champion.
(Sources: Okla. Internet Newspaper Gateway, American Chess Bulletin)

1913 — J.B. France defeats Charles Luja for State Title: 3½ - 1½

In late November 1913, members of the Lawton chess club saw this article in the *American Chess Bulletin* and decided to issue a challenge to Luja, putting forth their top player, *J.B. France* (an earlier claimant to the state championship years previously), as challenger.

A match was immediately arranged and France played Charles Luja a 6-game match in Lawton. (Luja must have traveled there and presumably it lasted 2-3 days.)

The first three games were drawn, and then France won games 4 and 5 to win the match.
(Source: Frank K Berry research in the Daily Oklahoman archives, story published Nov 24, 1913).

On the basis of these reports, Frank Berry in his 2007 article on this in his *Oklahoma Chess Bulletin* proposed listing Luja as the first state champion, for the year 1913, and France as champion for 1914 (even though he won it in late 1913).

1914 — First State Title Tournament (correspondence).

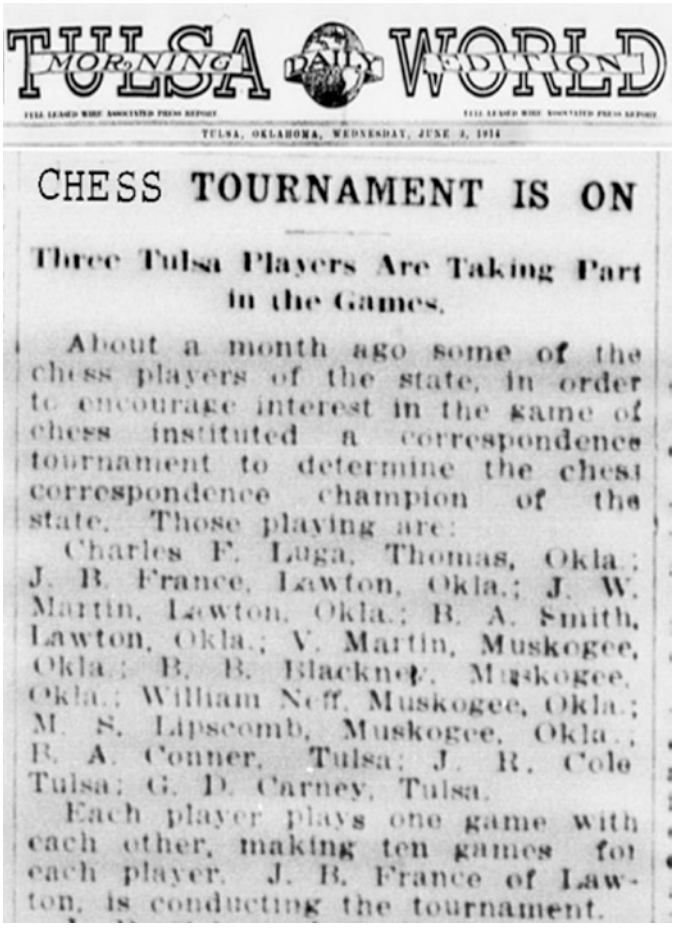
In view of the claims to the title made by Charles Luja and J.B. France in 1913, which other players around the state may have looked on with skepticism, the OKC Chess and Checkers Club took upon itself the task of organizing the first inter-city chess championship.

Newspaper reports on club activities had frequently quoted club leaders as hoping to soon arrange a state championship; but so far none had taken place. This time B.F. Lee, secretary of the OKC Chess and Checkers Club, contacted by mail the known clubs in the state – notably the clubs in Lawton and Muskogee, which were quite active at the time, as well as in Sulphur, Durant, Guthrie, Thomas, and Tulsa.

Travel in those days made an over-the-board tournament hard to arrange and expensive, which perhaps is the main reason why previous attempts to organize one had fallen through. So it was decided to do the event by correspondence (i.e., by snail mail!) and each club would nominate its best players for the event.

It was organized in May 1914, and began June 2, 1914.

A short article in the *Tulsa World* listed the players:



TULSA MORNING DAILY WORLD EDITION

TULSA, OKLAHOMA, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 1914

CHESS TOURNAMENT IS ON

Three Tulsa Players Are Taking Part in the Games.

About a month ago some of the chess players of the state, in order to encourage interest in the game of chess instituted a correspondence tournament to determine the chess correspondence champion of the state. Those playing are:

Charles F. Luga, Thomas, Okla.; J. B. France, Lawton, Okla.; J. W. Martin, Lawton, Okla.; B. A. Smith, Lawton, Okla.; V. Martin, Muskogee, Okla.; B. B. Blackney, Muskogee, Okla.; William Neff, Muskogee, Okla.; M. S. Lipscomb, Muskogee, Okla.; B. A. Conner, Tulsa; J. R. Cole Tulsa; G. D. Carney, Tulsa.

Each player plays one game with each other, making ten games for each player. J. B. France of Lawton, is conducting the tournament.

The players were considered the best in the state at the time:

1. J.B. France (Lawton)
2. Charles F. Luja (Thomas)
3. J.W. Martin (Lawton)
4. B.A. Smith (Lawton)
5. William Neff (Muskogee)
6. Villard Martin (Muskogee)
7. B.B. (Ben) Blakeney (Muskogee)
8. M.S. Lipscomb (Muskogee)
9. J.R. Cole (Tulsa)
10. B.A. Conner (Tulsa)
11. G.D. Carney (Tulsa)

The tournament was a round robin, and thus consisted of 10 games each.

It's interesting to note that Muskogee got 4 players, Lawton and Tulsa 3, and yet Oklahoma City got none, despite the fact their club initiated the event! We don't know how such choices were made. Possibly they had an objective measure for choosing the participants of which we aren't aware. Possibly some OKC players simply weren't able to play due to the time demands of correspondence games.

It seems clear though that the Muskogee and Lawton clubs were very active and at least as well attended as OKC. Still I find it surprising that this is the final player list they came up with (and I wonder if perhaps the *Tulsa World* got some cities wrong in their report).

In any case, the games began in June 1914, and if you remember your history you'll recall that World War I began the following month. Nevertheless, the USA endeavored to stay out of the war for the next several years and the tournament continued. (However as the war dragged on it began to disrupt the chess momentum happening in Oklahoma — and everywhere else — more and more.)

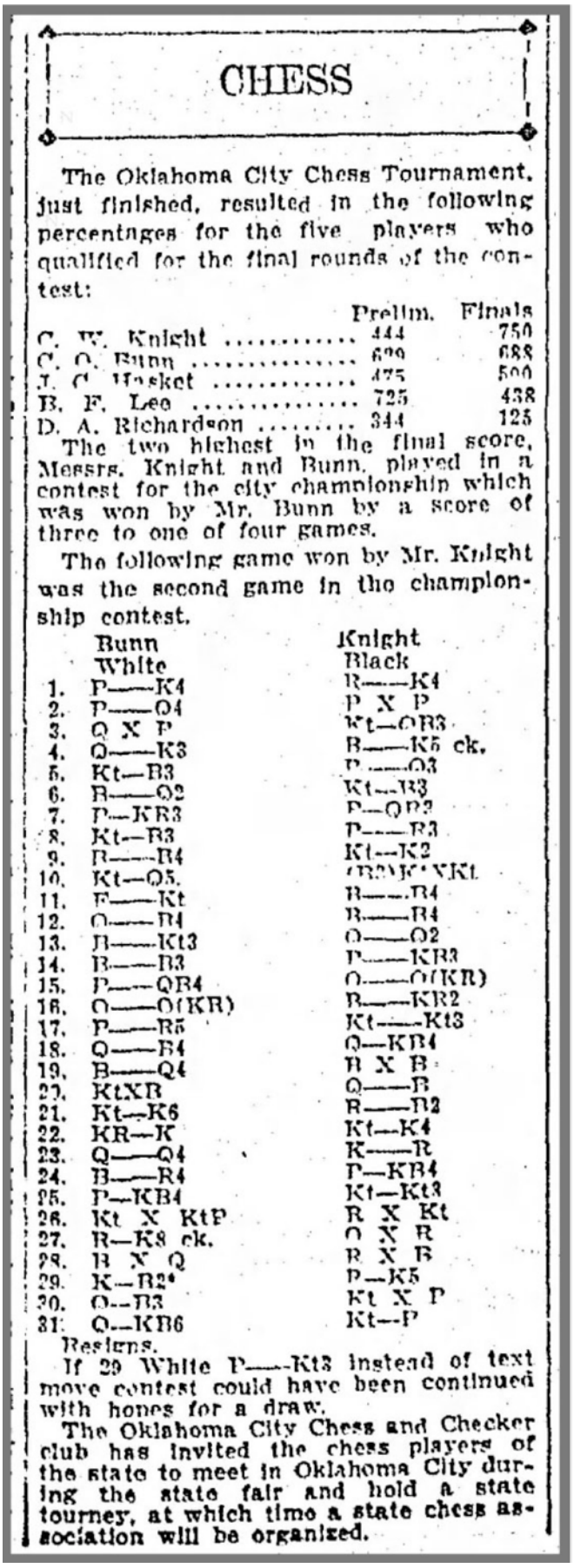
This correspondence tournament lasted about 8 months and was finished in March, 1915 (see below).

1914 — Oldest recorded game known from Oklahoma.

In the summer of 1914 the OKC club held its city championship tournament (another event decided by percentages).

The *Daily Oklahoman* in OKC printed the results. In this case the event resulted in a 4-game playoff match between C.W. Knight and C.O. Bunn. Knight won this match 3-1.

The report on this event included a game score, which is the earliest surviving game notation from Oklahoma. …



CHESS

The Oklahoma City Chess Tournament, just finished, resulted in the following percentages for the five players who qualified for the final rounds of the contest:

	Prelim.	Finals
C. W. Knight	444	750
C. O. Bunn	699	688
J. C. Hasket	475	500
B. F. Lee	725	438
D. A. Richardson	344	125

The two highest in the final score, Messrs. Knight and Bunn, played in a contest for the city championship which was won by Mr. Bunn by a score of three to one of four games.

The following game won by Mr. Knight was the second game in the championship contest.

	Bunn White	Knight Black
1.	P—K4	P—K4
2.	P—Q4	P X P
3.	Q X P	Kt—QB3
4.	Q—K3	B—K5 ck.
5.	Kt—B3	P—Q3
6.	B—Q2	Kt—B3
7.	P—KR3	P—QR3
8.	Kt—B3	P—B3
9.	B—B4	Kt—K2
10.	Kt—Q5.	(illegible)
11.	P—Kt	B—B4
12.	Q—B4	B—B4
13.	B—Kt3	Q—Q2
14.	B—B3	P—KB3
15.	P—QB4	Q—Q(KR)
16.	Q—Q(KR)	B—KR2
17.	P—B5	Kt—Kt3
18.	Q—B4	Q—KB4
19.	B—Q4	B X B
20.	KtXB	Q—B
21.	Kt—K6	R—B2
22.	KR—K	Kt—K4
23.	Q—Q4	K—R
24.	B—R4	P—KB4
25.	P—KB4	Kt—Kt3
26.	Kt X KtP	R X Kt
27.	R—K8 ck.	Q X R
28.	B X Q	B X B
29.	K—B2*	P—K5
30.	Q—B3	Kt X P
31.	Q—KB6	Kt—P

Resigns.

If 29 White P—Kt3 instead of text move contest could have been continued with hopes for a draw.

The Oklahoma City Chess and Checker club has invited the chess players of the state to meet in Oklahoma City during the state fair and hold a state tourney, at which time a state chess association will be organized.

It was published in old English Descriptive Notation but was transcribed by Frank Berry in 2007:

C.O.Bunn — C.W.Knight
OKC Ch OKC (rd 2), 9.Aug.1914
[FKB - Move 29 note probably by Knight]
1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.Qxd4 Nc6 4.Qe3 Bb4+ 5.Nc3 d6 6.Bd2 Nf6 7.h3 a6 8.Nf3 h6 9.Bc4 Ne7 10.Nd5 Nfxd5 11.exd5 Bc5 12.Qf4 Bf5 13.Bb3 Qd7 14.Bc3 f6 15.a4 0–0 16.0–0 Bh7 17.a5 Ng6 18.Qc4 Qf5 19.Bd4 Bxd4 20.Nxd4 Qc8 21.Ne6 Rf7 22.Rfe1 Ne5 23.Qd4 Kh8 24.Ba4 f5 25.f4 Ng6 26.Nxg7 Rxg7 27.Re8+ Qxe8 28.Bxe8 Rxe8 29.Kh2 [If 29.g3 instead of text move then contest could have been continued with hopes for a draw.] 29...Re4 30.Qc3 Nxf4 31.Qf6 Nxg2 0–1

1915 — First State Championship Tournament Results

After 8 months of play, the results of the first state championship tournament came in.

Originally I believed that this state championship (correspondence) tournament was won by Luja (due to an article a couple years later in the *Tulsa World* that seemed to imply Luja was the champion), but I found the following report in the *Tulsa World* (March 3, 1915) that lists the winners. Apparently one of the players had to drop out as only 10 of the 11 players finished.

The results are surprising in that none of the supposed top players finished in the top 3 places:

First State Championship Tournament (Correspondence)

1.	*William Neff* (Muskogee)	8-1
2.	Villard Martin (Muskogee)	7 (?)
3.	B.A. Conner (Tulsa)	6½-2 ½

TULSA MAN THIRD BEST CHESS PLAYER

In an Oklahoma state chess tournament, carried on by correspondence commenced more than six months ago and completed this week, Will Neff of Muskogee won first place, with seven games and two draws. Willard Martin of Muskogee was second and Ben C. Conner of Tulsa third. Mr. Conner won six games, lost two and played one draw.

The league was composed of ten members, those not mentioned above being George Carney of Tulsa, J. R. Cole of Tulsa, J. W. Martin of Lawton, J. S. Frantz of Lawton, W. M. Smith of Lawton, and Charles Leija of Thomas.

I'm not sure how reliable this report is, considering how many spelling errors it seems to have, (Willard Martin should be "Villard", Leija should be "Luja", etc.) but it does seem clear that William Neff, an attorney in Muskogee, won this championship and should be listed as the state champion for 1915 in future lists.

Even so, I suspect that there may have been a lot of grumbling around the state that this event was not a true test, as it was by correspondence, which is a different thing from over-the-board play. For example, a player like Tulsa's J.R. Cole (Tulsa city club champion) is a hard-working businessman and probably did not have much time for the demands of these 10 correspondence games. A couple of articles in the Muskogee newspaper around this time also discuss the fact that Neff and Martin are experienced with correspondence chess.

Nevertheless, despite some grumbling, this was the official championship of 1915 and I think Neff deserves to be put on the list of State Champions for it for that year, even if the tournament was not ideal.

Indeed, so far this is the only state championship tournament or match for which I've been able to find evidence from the period 1915-1922. That doesn't mean that other such tournaments didn't happen, however. Some articles from this time indicate a club's intention to organize a state "inter-city" tournament, but no follow-up articles in newspapers exist that confirm that such an event ever happened. But newspaper coverage of chess club activities is always spotty and no doubt chess activity was going on that did not appear in papers.

In late 1922 the Tulsa Chess Club, which as we will see in Part 2 was EXTREMELY active at the time, was seriously organizing another state championship tournament and it was specified at the time that they wanted it to be an over-the-board tournament. Remarkably, the spokesman for the club told the *Tulsa World* newspaper that the player still considered (at least in Tulsa) to be the champion was … Charles Luja! It's unclear if this represents confusion on part of the players, or whether perhaps Luja won his title back somehow between 1915-1922, or whether simply Luja was good at promoting himself among other claimants.

1916 — First Known Nationally Printed Game

The *American Chess Bulletin* printed the score of a "highly interesting game conducted by means of telephone" between Hon. R. J. Ray of Lawton (who was as County Court Judge in Comanche County), and J.B. France of Lawton (the 1914 state champion). According to the OCB, the game took about 30 days to complete.

This game was also printed in English Descriptive Notation. I have transcribed it and made it *GAME OF THE MONTH* for this issue (see page 15).

1917-18 — World War I (Disruptions of Chess Activity)

In these years America entered the war and the social interruptions this caused led to a cessation of most chess pursuits here (not to mention in Europe, where some masters were imprisoned, and others lost their lives in the war). In Oklahoma, the momentum the state's players were creating for their clubs in the years 1911-1915 was lost, and essentially the chess clubs stopped meeting during this time.

1919-1920 — Chess Clubs Reorganize

After the war-ending armistice was signed in November 1918 a story appeared in OKC *Daily Oklahoman* that the Chess and Checkers Club would be reforming itself. It had a new site at the "Baltimore Building" in 1919 somewhere near downtown (which I have not been able to identify). Similarly, in 1920 the Tulsa Chess Club restarted itself, meeting initially at the YMCA downtown but soon getting permanent club facilities (in 1921)…

END OF PART 1

PART 2 (1920-1972) will be presented in a future issue.

TEASER:

The years between the world wars (1920-1945) were the scene of a major shift in chess in Oklahoma — to the Tulsa area. The effects of World War I combined with the deadly worldwide smallpox epidemic and – locally – the oil boom particularly in Tulsa, all led to some changes in Oklahoma chess. Chess in Tulsa flourished, benefitting from support from wealthy sponsors, and featuring some spectacular chess events. This story plus the formation of the U.S.C.F. in 1939 and the OCA in 1945 will be told, followed by the Jerry Spann Era (1955-1968) and the other steps leading up to the Fischer Boom of 1972. This story of the 2nd era in Oklahoma Chess will have to wait for another issue of OCM …

The World Champion during this time period was Dr. Emanuel Lasker:

"The greatest of the champions was, of course, Emanuel Lasker." – Mikhail Tal

"Emanuel Lasker...was a coffeehouse player." – Bobby Fischer

"The idea of chess art is unthinkable without Emanuel Lasker." – Alexander Alekhine

"I admired him ... until I studied his games." – Bent Larsen

"My chess hero." – Viktor Korchnoi

"The quality of (19th century games) games ... they are horrible. Even Steinitz-Zukertort, Steinitz-Lasker (groans). – Garry Kasparov

- France, J.B.
- Ray, R.J.

Telephone Match in Lawton, 1916
[C58] *[Notes by Braunlich]*

This is the first known game from Oklahoma that was printed in a national magazine — the *American Chess Bulletin*, in 1916.

It was played between J.B.France (white), who was the recently deposed state champion only about a year earlier than this game (see the history article in this issue), and Hon. R.J. Ray, a county judge in Comanche County. Both players are from Lawton, which had a very active club at this time. I discovered this game in research in the ACB while writing this month's history article. It was printed in English Descriptive Notation and I translated it here for the database.

The ACB introduced the game this way: "Judge Ray ventured upon the sacrifice of a Rook on the fourteenth move, the soundness of which did not seem to have been invalidated by subsequent analysis. His decision to offer this sacrifice had been made when he moved 10...Bc5. The learned jurist will be glad to hear the opinions of the Bulletin's readers regarding the enterprising continuation, by means of which he carried the game to a successful conclusion." (ACB, 1914) Indeed it is a very pretty sacrifice, although his champion opponent was too slow to realize the danger and defended poorly in a couple of key positions.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 Na5 6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6

Already we see that the two players are pretty well versed on their openings - they play the main line of the Two Knights Defense, an opening that was popular at the time, having already been played by such players as Anderson, Zukertort, etc. back in the mid 1800s. More recently it had been often used by Steinitz, who played it as white a half dozen times in his world championship match with Chigorin just 20 years earlier. No doubt these players were aware of those games, where the most common move by far is 8. Be2, but instead France plays...

8.Ba4?!

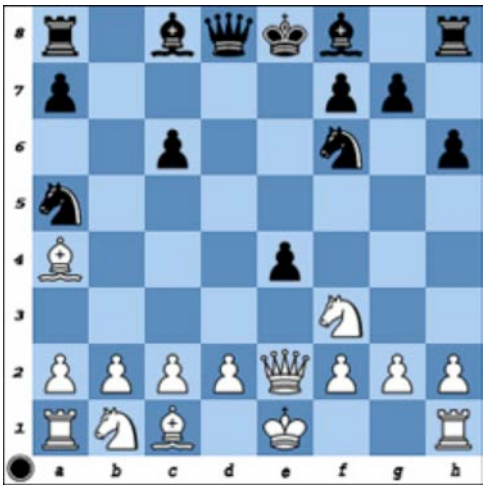
This unusual move had been tried a few times before by the likes of Adolf Andersson in 1846, and Horwitz; but without success. I suspect J.B. France was trying to get his opponent "out of the book" with this move, but it is not a good spot for the bishop, which is missed in helping defend the kingside.

8.Be2 h6 9.Nf3 is the main line.

8.Qf3!? is maybe what white should try if white wants something tricky. This was played in Tulsa at the 2008 FKB U.S. Championship between GM Kaidanov and GM Onischuk -- a game that can be found in the Okie Database annotated by GM Kavalek! Check it out.

8...h6 9.Nf3 e4 10.Qe2

This line is considered great for black compared to the main line, mainly because the B on a4 is not helping to defend the light squares on the kingside. Black's QB can eventually go to a6 or g4 and cause a lot of trouble.



10...Bc5! Anticipating a sharp sacrifice.

The computer prefers the move 10...Be6 because apparently white has to reply Ng1, since 11.Ne5 runs into trouble after 11...Qd4 such as in this game: 12.Bxc6+ Nxc6 13.Qb5 Bc5 14.Qxc6+ Ke7 15.Qb7+ Kd6 16.0-0 Kxe5 17.d3 Ng4 18.Nc3 Qb4 19.d4+ Qxd4 20.Bf4+ Kf5 21.Be3 Qb4 22.Qc6 Nxe3 23.fxe3+ Kg6 24.Rxf7 Qc4 25.Rc7 Rhc8 26.Kh1 Rxc7 27.Qxc7 Rf8 28.h3 Kh7 29.Qe5 Bxe3 30.Qxe4+ Qxe4 31.Nxe4 Bd5 32.Nc3 Ba8 33.Rd1 Rf2 34.Nd5 Bxd5 35.Rxd5 Rxc2 36.Rd3 Bf4 37.g3 Be5 38.Ra3 Rxb2 39.Rxa7 Bxg3 0-1 Orujov (2185) - Davidov (2326)/Baku 2007

11.Ne5 0-0! 12.Nxc6 Nxc6 13.Bxc6

13...Qb6!?

Very creative play by Judge Ray! It's not really a rook sacrifice, as he will get the bishop for it; but he will be down 2 pawns plus the exchange in the resulting position. Is the sacrifice really good, or is it "coffeehouse chess" as they called it in those days?

Black had a good alternative in 13...Rb8 that objectively is better. Then for example 14.0-0 Bg4 15.Qe1 Qc7 16.Ba4 Bd6 is a very strong for black. He is down only two pawns and has both a huge development lead and a massive kingside attack.

14.Bxa8 Bf5 15.Bxe4?

This bit of greed is a big mistake, after which black's compensation for the material becomes real. To defend this position white desperately needs to complete his development or reduce black's attacking potential, or both. Instead of selling his bishop for the pawn, he should save this tempo and get some other pieces out! This is worth a lot more than the pawn!

One simple way to consolidate white's position is 15.Nc3 Rxa8 16.Na4 —eliminating the dangerous bishop — 16...Qd6 17.Nxc5 Qxc5 18.0-0 Qxc2 19.b3 intending Qc4 19...Rc8 20.Ba3 This was all practically forced, and white is a pawn plus the exchange ahead, with trades coming down the c-file. So he is winning.

15...Bxe4 16.0-0 Re8 17.Qd1

A picturesque position! If ever there was a clearer example of "material" versus "time" I haven't seen it!

So what do you think? Who is better here? Does black have enough compensation for 3

pawns plus an exchange?

Heck yes, sure he does! Just look at the position of those screaming bishops and active black pieces, with a wide-open board full of dangerous diagonals and fearsome files to play on!

17...Qc6!

[Tempting was 17...Bxf2+ since 18.Rxf2 Bxc2! 19.Qf1 Ng4 is murder.

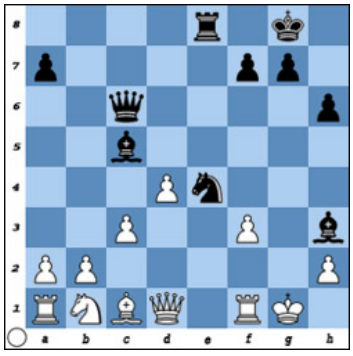
However, 17...Bxf2+ 18.Kh1 is a better try and my computer says it is about even then.

The queen move to c6 instead is stronger, increasing the pressure on white's position. White can't really defend the g-pawn.

18.Re1

Perhaps a better defense was 18.d4 Bxg2 19.f3!? to shut down the diagonal by giving back most of his extra material. But black is still winning with either: 19...Bh3!? *(or 19...Bxf1 20.Kxf1 Bxd4* is also probably winning I think.*)* 20.c3 *(20.dxc5? Ne4! 21.fxe4 Qg6+ 22.Kf2 Qg2+ 23.Ke3 Qxe4+ 24.Kf2 Qg2#)*

20...Ne4!



(analysis)

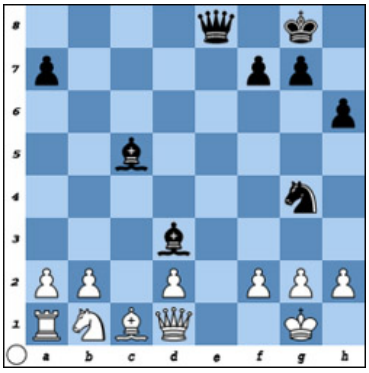
21.fxe4 Qg6+ 22.Kf2 Qg2+ 23.Ke3 Qxe4+ 24.Kd2 Be7! and wins!

The only piece white seems to get off his back rank in this game is his king!

18...Re6?

Unfortunately, this spoils Judge Ray's masterpiece.

He overlooks an immediate crushing win with 18...Bxc2! 19.Rxe8+ Qxe8 20.Qf1 Bd3! 21.Qd1 Ng4 with a mating attack, for example:



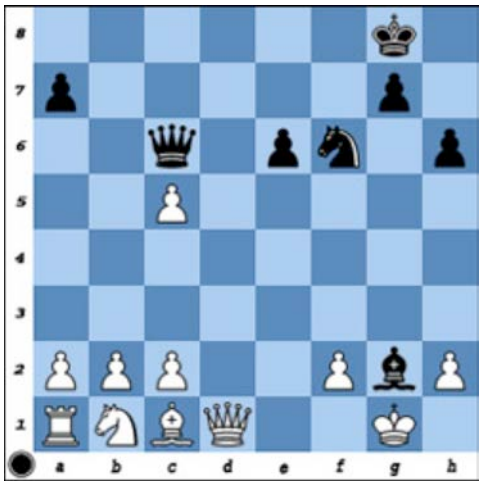
(analysis)

22.h3 Bxf2+ 23.Kh1 Bg3 24.hxg4 Qe7 and mate. That would have been a game to be proud of, for sure. But now France is given a Chance!]

19.d4 Bxg2 20.Rxe6 fxe6 21.dxc5??

France's greed really kills him in this game, and now he is lost again. It makes me revise downward my estimation of his true playing strength, as he seems to value material much too highly for a state champion, even in those "wild west" chess days in which everyone was lousy at defending. But we shouldn't be too hard on him with just the evidence of one game, and besides coffeehouse style chess was known to be all about attack.

He BADLY needs to get some pieces out for defense, for example: 21.Nc3 Bh1 22.Qf1 Bxd4 23.Be3! Be5 24.f4 and black's compensation is dwindling away. White is probably winning. Whereas now Judge Ray finishes the game with panache...



21...Bh3! 22.Qf1

Sad, but 22.f3 Qxc5+ 23.Kh1 Qf2 and mates. And 22. Qd8+ is met by 22...Kf7!

22...Bxf1 23.Kxf1 Qh1+ 24.Ke2 Qxc1 25.Kd3 Qxb2 0-1

Review by IM John Donaldson

Kurt Richter: A Chess Biography with 499 Games by Alan McGowan (McFarland 2018, 384 pages, $75)

This beautifully produced oversize red hardback with library binding is a model of what a game collection and biography should be. It covers the life of Kurt Richter, a German master remembered for his great attacking games, opening innovations and contributions to chess literature as both a writer of books and editor of several magazines. Richter accomplished all of this despite only starting to play seriously at age 16.

Although he played many exciting games Richter's most lasting legacy as a player are his numerous contributions to opening theory and McGowan spends one chapter covering the novelties he unearthed in his favorite Budapest Gambit (both 3...Ng4 and 3...Ne4) and Scandinavian (including the little tried 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.c4 b5?!). His fascination with ...b5 in the opening can also be seen in his adoption of the Polish Defense (both 1.d4 b5 and 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 b5), but Richter also put his touch on more mainstream openings. I remembered the Richter Attack in the French (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.Bxf6 Bxf6 6.e5 Be7 7.Qg4), but until reading this book did not realize Richter was a pioneer who played what is now known as the Veresov decades before the Soviet master of that name did.

Most chess players, if they recall the name Richter at all, associate it with the opening sequence 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Bg5: the Richter-Rauzer Attack. Many modern observers have written off Richter's contributions to the line, dismissing his treatment as nothing more than cheap tricks, nothing like the modern treatment with 7. Qd2 followed by castling queenside.

Nothing could be further than the truth. McGowan makes a well-researched argument that if anything there is a strong case for Richter having a stronger association with the opening than Rauzer. Of the 499 games in this book 13 feature the German master playing 6.Bg5 and in 6 of them White followed up with 7.Qd2, and in five of them played 8.0-0-0 followed. It should be noted that no games of Rauzer playing 6.Bg5 have been published although he analyzed the variation extensively.

The well-annotated games in this book feature a wealth of aggressive chess with beautiful combinations and sharp attacks throughout - Richter didn't play safety first chess.

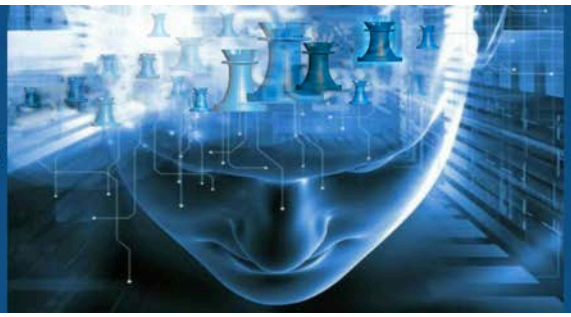
The games are not the only reason to buy this book. McGowan, who spent three decades researching and writing this work in what was clearly a labor of love, has uncovered a great deal of previously unknown material pertaining to not only Richter but his contemporaries. It covers not only the period between the two World Wars, but also the latter part of Richter's life when the native Berliner found himself stuck in the eastern part of the city. McGowan has included numerous artifacts and photographs. Many crosstables round out a first-rate production.

McFarland has published many outstanding books the past three-plus decades and *Kurt Richter: A Chess Biography with 499 Games* ranks right up there with the best.

This is a wonderful book that would make a perfect Christmas present for any serious chess player.

Highly Recommended

UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS



For More Tournament Info Visit the USCF Tournament Site:
www.uschess.org/tlas/upcoming.php

Dec 1-2 — 2nd STEVE WHARRY CLASSIC — Oklahoma City, OK

5-SS; G/90+30; Wyndham Hotel Oklahoma City, 2945 Northwest Expressway, OKC 73112, (405)848-4811. Three Sections: Open, Reserve (U1600), Novice (U1200). EF: Novice: $30. Open & Reserve: $45 if mailed by 11/26, $50 at site. FREE entry for Masters 2200+ (deducted from prizes) Prizes $$2100 (based on 55 paid entries, 1st place guaranteed). Open: $500(G)-200 X: 200 A: 200-100, U1800: 200-100 Reserve (U1600): C: $200-100, U1400: 200-100, Novice: $$ per entries. Byes: One half-point bye Rds 1-5 if commit before Sat 9PM. REG: 9-9:45 Sat AM Rounds: 10-2:30-7, 9-1:15. Entries to: Tom Braunlich, 7500 S. Birch, Broken Arrow OK 74011. Inquiries: tom.braunlich@cox.net Web: www.ocfchess.org

Dec 29 — 28th Annual HOLIDAY OPEN — Tulsa, OK

4-SS, G/50+15 spm. (Dual rated). Harvard Avenue Baptist Church, 3235 E. 17th St. (17th & Harvard), Tulsa, OK. Cash Prizes $200-1st(G), plus other cash prizes per entries. Free coffee and refreshments. REG.: 9-9:45 AM. RDS.: 10-12:30-3-5:30 PM. EF: $20 cash or check at door. BYES: One 1/2-point bye Rds. 1, 2 or 3. LS W. Advance Entries and Information: Jim Berry, P O Box 351, Stillwater, OK 74076. JABerrycg@aol.com.

Feb 14-18 — 10th Annual SOUTHWEST CLASS CHAMPIONSHIPS — Fort Worth TX

9SS (Master Section), or 7SS (class sections), DFW Airport Marriott South, 4151 Centreport Blvd., Fort Worth, TX 76155. This event has multiple sections and schedules, a $33,000 prize fund — and high entry fees. FIDE ratings used in Master Section, USCF February in others. HR: $103-103, 817-358-1700, reserve by 1/29 or rate may increase. Ent: Continental Chess, Box 249, Salisbury Mills, NY 12577. Questions: chesstour.com, DirectorAtChess.US, 347-201-2269. Advance entries posted at chessaction.com (click "entry list" after entering). Blitz tournament Sun 10:30 pm, enter by 10:15 pm.

Mar 9 — FOUR STATES WINTER OPEN — Joplin, MO

4-SS, G/60 d5. Hilton Garden Inn, 2644 E. 32nd St., Joplin, MO 64804. 2 Sections, Open: $120-80, U1600 60, U1400: $60-40. 4.0 Bonus: $20. Sections may be combined for pairing purposes. Prizes: b/30 full-paid entries. EF: $30 by 3/8, $40 at door. Scholastic (rating only) $15 by 3/8, $25 at door. Email entry accepted for lower rate. MCA membership required, OSA. Reg.: 8-9. Rounds: 9:30-11:45-2:30-4:45. Byes: One 1/2 point bye if requested before round 2 Ent: martin.stahl@joplinchess.org with cash onsite, paypal.me/joplinchess or mailed to Joplin Chess Club, 2609 New Hampshire, Joplin, MO 64804. Checks payable to Martin Stahl. Info: joplinchess.org, martin.stahl@joplinchess.org, 417-483-1554.

OCF EVENTS IN 2019

For next year OCF is currently planning 4-5 traditional two-day tournaments, (including at least one "ConSat" event) along with 4 one-day tournaments and several special events!

DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEXT OKLAHOMA CHESS MONTHLY